

The Acts: Its Continuity to the Gospels (Part 1)

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 05 June 2008

Preacher: Marvin Wiseman

[0 : 00] The progressiveness of Revelation and the Gospels. We saw the story of redemption unfold, and I want to emphasize that very important fact.

The Bible is a story. Now, some people think of a story as being something that's fiction, but we all know stories can be true as well as fiction.

And the Bible represents the truth of God's interacting with man from creation through his redemption up to his ultimate glorification.

And if we fail to see that this book is a story that has to be told, and it begins unfolding gradually over a period of many, many years, if we fail to see that, then we'll never come to the conclusion that it is a progressive revelation.

And yet I am satisfied that is one of the more principal keys for understanding it. We noted that the central theme of the Gospels, and by that I mean Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, reaches right back to their Old Testament roots, and that is redemption via the kingdom of heaven coming to earth through the direct efforts of the Messiah, the one who will be the Redeemer.

[1 : 17] Remember, in the Gospels, he is identified as Jesus Christ, Son of God, Son of David, Prophet of Nazareth, Son of Joseph and Mary, etc., etc.

The question, of course, throughout all Jewry during that time was whether or not Jesus of Nazareth was indeed the one promised by Moses and all of the prophets. We have come to the conclusion that he is.

This Messiah Redeemer is going to, as is recorded in the Gospels, is going to provide God, and this is very important, very important, this Messiah Redeemer is going to provide God with the legal and righteous basis for lifting the curse on creation by becoming a curse for us.

That's the Gospel story. Christ died for our sin. That enables God to pardon guilty sinners while still maintaining his integrity and his righteousness.

As Paul said it in Romans 3, that he might be just and the justifier of them that believe in Jesus. Now, that has always been God's plan. It is imperative that we understand that the idea of Jesus Christ dying on the cross for the sins of man was not some kind of an afterthought.

[2 : 41] It was not some kind of desperate conclusion or idea that God came to when men by wicked hands decided to crucify the Son of God, and all at once God says, Well, if they're going to crucify him, how can I turn that into something positive?

I know. I've got it. I'll make his death applicable to the death of all. None of that. None of that. Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God slain before the foundation of the world.

It was always in the mind and heart and plan of God that the Son should be the Savior of the world, that he would be the Redeemer.

With God, there is no plan B. He never has to back up, reassess the situation, decide that he can't do it this way, he has to do it this way instead.

He has never altered his plan. God has no plan B. He has no afterthoughts. It was always in his mind that the Son should be the Savior of the world.

[3 : 42] Now, having said that, let me say this. But men didn't always understand that. It was not revealed. It is found in the Old Testament by type and shadow.

In the sacrificial system, little did they know at the time when God instituted the whole principle of the innocent dying for the guilty, little did they know that the time would come when a member of the triune Godhead would step out of heaven and would fulfill that type by being the antitype, the completion of it.

Little did they know that the Passover lamb which they prepared and which the family ate each year in conjunction with their having been brought out of Egypt, little did they know that that Passover lamb is really an object lesson.

And that little lamb is a type of God's perfect lamb. They didn't understand that. And if they didn't understand it in the Old Testament, even though it is there in symbol, in type, in shadow, and so on, neither did they understand it in the Gospels.

You do not find Jesus sitting with the twelve around the campfire talking about his upcoming death and Peter turns to Andrew and to James and John and says something like this, Well, now in a few days Jesus is going to go to Jerusalem and there he'll be rejected by the chief priests and the scribes and the Pharisees and the crowd will cry out for his blood and he will end up being crucified.

[5 : 20] And we all know that this is coming. It's inevitable. We are sorry that it's going to happen but after all, this is how God is going to accomplish redemption for humanity.

You don't find any conversations like that at all. What you do find is something like this and from that time Jesus began to tell his disciples how that he must needs go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the chief priests and the scribes and the Pharisees and be crucified and the third day be raised up again.

And Peter said, Not so, Lord! This shall not be unto thee! We'll not hear to it! You aren't going to die! You aren't going to be crucified!

Not as long as I've got anything to do with it you won't! And Jesus said to Peter, Get thee behind me, Peter! Get thee behind me, Satan! For thou savorest not the things that are of God but the things that are of men.

Now all that means is this, is that Satan had at that time influenced the thinking of Peter and whereas the Son of God was sent to die for the sins of man and he knew that from the cradle on, from before the cradle, he knew that.

[6 : 45] Peter didn't know that. And Peter was thinking the same way you and I would have thought. Can you think of anything more painful, more negative, more hurtful, more disastrous than for the Son to be crucified?

Peter says, Stop talking like that! And Jesus says, Well, Peter, I know where you're coming from. And the problem is you're thinking just like everybody else thinks.

But you're not thinking the way God thinks. And in God's predeterminate plan, that's the price that must be paid for sin. Peter didn't understand that. Didn't understand it at all.

Why? Because it was not revealed in such a way that it would register, that they could comprehend. It just wasn't unfolded then.

But it was later. Now, everybody could understand it after the fact. So, keep that in mind, if you will, as we come now to Luke chapter 24, let's go there first, then we'll slide right into Acts.

[7 : 57] Luke chapter 24. And this is my favorite portion of Scripture, I suppose, in the Gospels at least. And it's a passage that has just become so endeared to me.

I want to read it beginning with verse 13. Luke chapter 24 and verse 13. The crucifixion is a reality. Jesus has been crucified and buried.

Truth of the matter is, the resurrection is also a reality, but these do not know it. Here's what we read, Luke 24 and verse 13. And behold, two of them, that is, two of his disciples, were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem.

And they were conversing with each other about all these things which had taken place. Now, what these things are which have taken place can easily be arrived at by just reading the several verses that precede this.

And it all has to do with the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. And it came about, verse 15, that while they were conversing and discussing, Jesus himself approached and began traveling with them.

[9 : 10] They were walking along the road and he just kind of came in from the side and joined them and start strolling along the road with them. But their eyes were prevented from recognizing him for a number of reasons.

I suspect that one of them was supernatural and I suspect that another was that if there was anyone whom these people had not planned to see, it was Jesus of Nazareth.

You don't ordinarily go walking down the road expecting someone who died a few days later to join you. So psychologically, the possibility that it could be their Lord was the furthest thing from their mind.

Their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. and he said to them, what are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking? And they stood still looking sad.

What that means is his question, which is so innocent, arrests them right in their tracks. They're walking down the road and when he says this they stop out of unbelief that anyone around there could ask a question like that.

[10 : 19] They just stop. They are arrested momentarily. and one of them named Cleopas answered and said to him, Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?

They are absolutely floored that he could be so out of it. What had taken place was of such monumental significance and everybody in Jerusalem knew about it.

Most of the people had even witnessed Jesus hanging there on the cross and they are absolutely smitten with the idea that someone could have arrived there on the scene who is so completely out of what was taking place that they didn't even know and they stood still looking sad.

You are, surely you've got to be the only person around here who doesn't know what's happened. And he says, Well, what things? What are you talking about? And they said to him, And I suspect that they may have said it rather impatiently.

What things? What things? Well, the things about Jesus and Nazarene who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him up to the sentence of death and crucified him.

[11 : 38] Tremendous statement now in verse 21. And we were hoping, we were hoping that it was he who was going to redeem Israel.

There had to be a real note of sadness and disappointment in that statement. We were hoping. Oh, did we have plans?

You know, we really were convinced that he was the one. He was going to redeem Israel. It's really something.

But, obviously, we were wrong. We were wrong. You don't redeem Israel from a cross.

But the truth of the matter is that's the only way Israel could be redeemed was from a cross. They didn't know that. They didn't know that. How do you redeem Israel? Well, you come in riding on that beautiful white horse and you get a sword that's about five feet long and you just tear into the Roman army and you scatter them and you defeat them and you drive them into the Mediterranean ocean and then you go into Jerusalem amid all the pomp and circumstance and you sit on the throne and you let all of the people proclaim you the king of Israel and you begin your rule over all the earth.

[13 : 11] That's the way you redeem Israel. That's all they could see. We trusted that it was he who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. Talk about the death of a dream.

This is it. And also, some women among us amazed us when they were at the tomb early in the morning and didn't find his body. They came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive.

You know how rumors and scuttlebutt gets around. And some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said, but him they did not see.

Why? Well, who knows? The Jews said that someone came and stole his body away. And he said to them, Oh, foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken.

What these people had done is what we are so prone to do. They had engaged in selective belief. They had believed the things they wanted to believe and they ignored the things they didn't want to believe.

[14 : 22] And what they wanted to believe was all of the regal stature and all of the aplomb and all of the pomp and circumstance and all that would accompany the glorious reign of the Messiah.

That's what they chose to believe. What is it that they chose not to believe? He was wounded for our transgressions. He was bruised for our iniquities.

The chastisement of our peace was upon him. With his stripes we are healed. That's what they chose not to believe. They didn't believe all that the prophets have said.

And then Jesus categorized the two aspects of the Messiah's role when he comes and he says was it not necessary for Christ, for the Messiah to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?

That is so important. What had they done? They just took the glory part. They didn't want the suffer part. I don't either. I don't know anybody that does. They just took the good and they left the bad.

[15 : 27] The Old Testament contains both messages. It tells us that there is a Messiah Redeemer who is coming and in his first advent he is coming to die.

He's going to be born of men to a lowly estate. He's going to be smitten and afflicted of men. We esteemed him not. We didn't regard him as anything.

We showed what we thought of him by hanging him on a cross. He's isolated from everyone. Died the death of a common criminal. That's the first coming.

The second coming is there also. That's the one that has every eye shall see him and the clouds will be pierced and then they shall see the sign of the Son of Man coming in power and great glory and all of his angels with him.

Hey, give us that one. That's the one we want. Jesus said, but you can't have the second one without the first one. You cannot have the glory without the suffering. He suffered.

[16 : 31] What yet remains, it's the glory. And that will be realized when he comes. And beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, he explained to them the things concerning himself and all the scriptures.

boy, did they ever get their eyes opened then. Now, that followed by the commission that he gives them at the conclusion of all of the gospels is where we must leave that account and come over, skip, if you will, past John because John has a different message, a different thrust and he will not help us.

But come from Luke to Acts chapter 1 and we'll see the continuation of the story. remember when Jesus was placed on the cross, they saw all hopes of the kingdom dashed.

And when the gospels close, he has given his commission to go into all the nations, preach the gospel and so on. Remember the message, the central message throughout all the gospels was the kingdom of heaven is at hand.

But when the gospels close, guess what? The death of Christ has become a reality. But there's still no kingdom. He hasn't established the kingdom.

[17 : 50] And they may very well wonder, well, what's the status of the kingdom? What's going to happen anyway? And that brings us to Acts chapter 1. The first account, Dr.

Luke is speaking. The first account is the gospel of Luke. The first account I composed, Theophilus, about all that Jesus began to do and teach. until the day when he was taken up, that is his ascension, after he had by the Holy Spirit given orders to the apostles whom he had chosen.

What do you think those orders were? I think they were Matthew 28, 19, and 20. Go ye therefore into all the world, Mark 16, and so on. Those were the orders that he gave them. To these, he also presented himself alive after his suffering, by many convincing proofs, appearing to them over a period of 40 days, and look at what he was talking about.

Speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. Now let me impress upon you one very important thing, and that is this.

That's still the issue. It is not a dead issue. It is still the issue. the Jews are still interested, vitally concerned about this kingdom.

[19 : 11] Matter of fact, it would be safe to say that the Jewish nation, including the twelve apostles, could not see beyond the kingdom. I mean, you talk about tunnel vision, that's the only thing that they could focus on.

That's all they were interested in. Because in their thinking, and they weren't incorrect, in their thinking, when this kingdom is established, it is going to cure all the world's ills.

And it will. It really will. When the kingdom is established, that's the end of all man's problems. Utopia has arrived. That's true. Little wonder that that's what they looked for and longed for.

They had a fiddle with one string on it, and it was the kingdom, and they played it, and played it, and played it, and that was all they cared about. Because when the Messiah comes, he's the king, he's going to establish the kingdom.

And here he is speaking of the things concerning the kingdom of God. Gathering them together, he commanded them not to leave Jerusalem. Now, wait a moment.

[20 : 21] He also told them to go into all the world. Now he's saying, don't leave Jerusalem. Well, they need to be equipped, and the going into all of the world is something that is designed to come later, but follow me now.

He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, which he said, you heard of from me.

For John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now. I think what he is talking about is going to occur in Acts chapter 2, when the Holy Spirit comes on the day of Pentecost.

We'll be there momentarily. Also, when they had come together, they were asking him, Lord, is it at this time you are restoring the kingdom to Israel?

What do you suppose they meant by that little phrase, this time? I think what they mean is, we thought you were going to establish the kingdom to Israel the other time, before your death, and before your resurrection, and before now.

[21 : 39] And we were wrong. In fact, as we look back on it, we thought we would be living in the kingdom now. That this would be it. We would have arrived. We would be in the kingdom.

obviously we were wrong. We didn't understand the timetable. We didn't understand the strategy. But now, are you going to do it now?

And they're all waiting with bated breath. This is all they can think of. Remember when they came to him on one occasion and said, Lord, grant that my brother can sit on the right hand and I on the left hand when you come into your kingdom.

And on another occasion, the mother of James and John made a similar plea for them. That's all they're talking about. All they're thinking about is the kingdom. The kingdom. Are you going to do it now? Jesus said to them, it is not for you to know times or epochs which the father has fixed by his own authority.

Now, that's somewhat vague and ambiguous. He sure could have clarified something for us and straightened out a lot of people if he had just said something like this, fellas, you're in the kingdom.

[22 : 59] Trust me. This is all the kingdom there's going to be because you see, all the while you've been thinking about a literal earthly physical kingdom. That was never in my mind.

That was never my intention. It is a spiritual kingdom kingdom. And my kingdom is going to be established in the hearts and lives of men and women who will enthrone me as the lord of their life.

I'll rule in them as their king. That's the kingdom. He certainly would have done us all a favor if he had said that. If a spiritual kingdom is all that was intended.

And it is very, very apparent that it is a physical kingdom that these people were anticipating. Jesus had made that so clear. When I come into my kingdom, you who have followed me, you're going to sit up on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes.

That is as concrete as it can get. They labored under the ongoing assumption that it was going to be a literal kingdom. And the question is, are you going to do it now? They knew they weren't living in the kingdom.

[24 : 06] That was very apparent. It's not so apparent to some today, but it was very apparent to them that they weren't living in the kingdom. When the kingdom of God comes, the will of God will be done on earth as it will as it is in heaven.

And men will learn of war no more. The knowledge of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the seas. Men will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. The lion and the lamb will lie down together.

When someone dies at the age of a hundred, you'll think they were a child. These are kingdom things. The lame man will leap like an heart. The tongue of the dumb will be loosed, and the ears of the deaf will be opened.

And these are kingdom things. They knew they weren't living in the kingdom. Jesus said, I have other plans for you. You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you.

And you shall be, as a result of that supernatural power, you shall be my witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the remotest part of the earth.

[25 : 13] Then we have, which will not take time to read, the account of the ascension, where Jesus simply disappears right out of their sight and they watch him go up. Now I want you to notice in verse 12, they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey away.

And when they had entered, they went to the upper room where they were staying. All of the apostles are named. And these all with one mind were continually devoting themselves to prayer along with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.

And at this time, Peter stood up, most logical one. Peter was the leader of the twelve. He'd been designated as the spokesman. It was to him the keys of the kingdom were given.

Peter stood up in the midst of the brethren. A gathering of about 120 persons was there together. And here's what Peter said. Brethren, the scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit foretold by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus.

For he was counted among us and received his portion in his ministry. Now this man acquired a field, and it goes on to recount about the death of Judas. Verse 21 is a conclusion that Peter is getting at.

[26 : 37] Judas is dead. He's out of the picture. So that leaves them with eleven apostles. Peter says in verse 21, It is therefore necessary that of the men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, that is, during the whole tenure of his earthly ministry, three plus years, believers.

Beginning with the baptism of John, that's from the earliest time when Jesus was introduced to Israel as a Messiah, until the day he was taken up from us, one of these should become a witness with us of his resurrection.

Jesus appointed twelve, we've only got eleven left. Now here is a big and important question. Were the apostles out of line in conducting this election?

Were they acting out of the flesh? Was it inappropriate for them to do this? After all, Jesus was the one who had personally selected them as apostles.

What right did they have to take it upon themselves to choose one to fill in the ranks? You must understand that Jesus had already delegated to these men apostolic authority, and that meant he gave them carte blanche to act in his behalf in his absence.

[28 : 08] And he gave them the power to perform miracles and so on. Some Bible teachers, and I respect these men, I don't agree with them, but I respect them. They are devoted men of God.

They are of the conclusion that the apostles here acted prematurely. They selected Matthias to take the place of Judas.

And if they had not run ahead of the Lord, but had just been patient and waited upon the Lord, God would have selected the apostle whom he intended to replace Judas.

And that man is Paul the apostle. So what the eleven did here is they kind of messed up everything. They threw a monkey wrench in the works, and they chose one, and he was designated as an apostle, but God never considered him an apostle because God's man all the time was Paul the apostle.

And the proof that is so often offered to indicate that that is true is because these people chose Matthias, but you never hear anything further about Matthias, which indicates that God didn't use him and that his ministry just came to nil because he really wasn't God's choice anyway.

[29 : 25] He was man's choice. But if you use that argument, then you have to say, well, Nathaniel isn't mentioned anymore either in the book of Acts. And neither is Bartholomew.

And neither is James the Less. And neither are most of the other apostles. They're not mentioned anymore either. Are we suggesting that God never used them either? Of course not.

The truth of the matter is, and this will surface and become abundantly apparent as we go on through the Acts, and even more so as we get into the Pauline epistles, that Paul the apostle was never intended to be a replacement for Judas because Paul the apostle is going to engage in an entirely different kind of apostleship that is different, radically different, from that for which the twelve were commissioned.

They had their ministry to Israel. Paul is raised up as the apostle to the Gentiles. And as such, he magnifies his office. The implications of that are considerable, and they will surface as we go along.

Now, Matthias is chosen. Verse 26, they drew lots for them, the lot fell to Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven. There is not a shred of evidence in the text that these men were acting in an unauthoritative way.

[30 : 47] No indication at all that God was displeased with their choosing Matthias. The record is simply stated. Now we arrive at chapter 2 of Acts, and I think it is safe to say that this is the most controversial portion in all of the New Testament.

Probably no portion in the Word of God so clearly divides those in the body of Christ as the interpretation of Acts chapter 2. This is the account of Peter's Pentecostal sermon, and the question is, and will remain, whether or not the account that is given in Acts chapter 2 is the establishment of a norm that is to be followed by the Christian church, whether the Christian church is supposed to adopt the events of Acts chapter 2 as a standard *modus operandi*.

Is this what we are supposed to be about? There are many, well, intentioned, sincere believers who say, yes, this is the pattern for the New Testament church.

These people are called Pentecostal. There is a whole denomination of Pentecostals, and the name is assigned to them because of their emphasis upon the necessity of practicing and duplicating what we have here in Acts chapter 2.

Progressive revelationists, such as myself, believe that what is recorded in Acts chapter 2 is not the establishment of a norm.

[32 : 37] It is merely another page in the story that is unfolding, and more is yet to come. This is not the final word, and this is not the final event. The historicity of it is certainly accurate.

It is intact. These people were doing what they were supposed to be doing. They were acting in accordance with the revelation that they had then, but it is not something that we are to seek to duplicate today.

And when you really bring this down to the bottom line, what you have is people who believe that miraculous healings are supposed to be the norm for today, as opposed to people who do not believe that.

People who believe that in order for you to be a devout, spirit-filled Christian today, you ought to speak with tongues. And then there are those who believe that is not for us today.

And so on it goes. It isn't likely that we're going to resolve it here, but we'll at least be able to set forth what we believe is the position that really ought to be taken.

[33 : 38] We are convinced that this is not intended to be a pattern for duplication. It was a one-time revelation. I have heard people say this. You probably have too.

What the church needs today is another Pentecost. And if believers today had the faith and the commitment and the dedication that these believers had back here, we too could do the miracles that they do.

But we just don't have the faith. We should have. But we don't. And I do not question the sincerity or the integrity of the people who hold these positions.

But I radically disagree with their conclusion. Now let's see why. When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place.

I take it that the all together here refers to the 120 that is found in chapter 1 and verse 14.

[34 : 41] I'm sorry. It isn't verse 14. Yeah, 15. Thank you. Verse 15 of Acts chapter 1.

They are all together. The eleven are among them. And the events that transpired are stated there in the subsequent verses. I'll not read them about the noise and the voice, the wind and how it filled the house and so on.

And they began speaking in these miraculous tongues. Note, if you will, that these people represent virtually every geographical location throughout the Mediterranean world.

They are scattered from all over. But the really super significant thing that is often overlooked, and I am amazed that so many commentators make no note of this.

And I think it is very much a key to the understanding of the whole thing. And that is that all of these people are Jews. This is a Jewish event. And all of these who are gathered together here are all Jews.

[35 : 45] And they are commemorating a Jewish feast, which is the Feast of Pentecost. And it's extremely significant that Peter's audience is exclusively made up of Jews.

Now, a pertinent question surfaces. Question. I thought the Jews were out of it. The Gospels close with the crucifixion of the Messiah.

Israel has rejected Jesus. That's it. Israel is finished. They're set aside. They had their opportunity, and they blew it.

And God is done with Israel. So what do we have here in Acts chapter 2? What is this? When these people are speaking with tongues, and men are looking for the meaning to this, can you imagine Peter standing up and saying, I'll tell you what this is.

This is the church. What? Well, it is no such thing. It is an assembly of believers, numbering 120.

[37 : 02] It is an ecclesia in that sense, in the same sense that it appears throughout the Old Testament as well. But it is not to be construed with the origin or the beginning of a new thing.

It is the fulfillment of a promise. What is happening on the day of Pentecost is not the launching of the New Testament church. It is the fulfilling of an Old Testament promise. It is.

It isn't the beginning of anything, and it isn't the ending of anything. I'll tell you what it is. It's the continuation of something. It is more of the story unfolding. The grand conclusion that Peter reaches after he has delivered his message, much of which, all of which, is taken from the Old Testament.

It's all that existed at that time. Really got through. His conclusion is in verse 36. Chapter 2.

Therefore, let all the house of Israel know. It's not pertinent for anybody else at this time. Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Messiah, this Jesus whom you crucified.

[38 : 22] Powerful, powerful message. And a conclusion just penetrated right to the very marrow of their bones. The light dawns upon these people.

How many there were, I don't know, but there were 3,000 that repented. I suspect there were many, many more there than that. You may wonder, how many people does this upper room accommodate? Listen, this is just where it started.

We're talking about in the temple. And I'm satisfied that's where the upper room was, in the temple. And it was very spacious. And down below was this enormous courtyard that could accommodate thousands and thousands of people.

And there were thousands there. And Peter stood on the steps and delivered this message. And the people are absolutely awestruck. And the thing that just literally smites them is the powerful, convicting truth of what Peter says.

And they can no longer deny it. He's right. This man is right. We did crucify the Messiah. Can you believe that? We prayed for him, waited for him, longed for him, hoped for him, for thousands of years.

[39 : 28] And when he came, we crucified him. This man is right. We can't deny it. They are torn up. And, well, they should be. They are spiritually smitten, stricken with conviction.

And they begin hand-wringing. They are upset with themselves and with the whole nation. Listen, what you're talking about is the blunder of all human time.

This is the blunder. This is the greatest fumble of humanity. Can it be?

It is. We can't deny it. We can't deny it. The truth just did them in. What are we going to do?

What are we going to do? It's right. He's right. We can't undo it. We can't change it. We crucified our Messiah. What can we do?

[40 : 28] Peter said, I'll tell you what to do. It's the same thing that John the Baptist told you to do and you rejected him. It's the same thing that Jesus told you to do before you crucified him and you rejected him.

Now, are you going to do the right thing this time? Or are you going to blow it again? I'll tell you what to do. Verse 38. Repent and let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

What baptism do you think these people thought that was? It was the only baptism they knew anything about. It was the baptism they had earlier rejected under John.

This wasn't anything new. They'd heard that before. They didn't stand around and scratch their head and say, be baptized. What's that? They knew full well what Peter meant.

They'd been preaching it for three years and they had poo-pooed the message. They'd rejected it. Peter says, if your repentance is genuine, if your convictions are true, then you won't have any problem following through with what you ought to do.

[41 : 52] You ought to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. And if you do, when you do, you will receive the Holy Spirit just like we have.

and 3,000 of them did so. The thing that is so perplexing to a great many people and that allows us to reach so many different kinds of conclusions is the fact that at the end of the Gospels, many people just write Israel off.

And they make the opening of the book of Acts the beginning of a whole new era and that is the church. But that is a fatal assumption that we cannot make. And one other thing that leads a great many people to believe that this is the beginning of the church.

Everybody knows Acts chapter 2 of the day of Pentecost, that's the birthday of the church. It's no such thing. It's the fulfillment of the promise to Israel. And in Acts chapter 2 in verse 47 in your King James Version it says, the Lord was adding to the church daily such as should be saved.

Most unfortunate translation. Most unfortunate. What the original says, even in the translation from which the King James is taken, is that the Lord added to the ecclesia, to the called out ones, those who were being saved.

[43 : 17] And who are those called out ones? Who is that ecclesia, that company? They are the 120 that started plus the 3,000 who repented at Peter's message and they are being added to in verse 47 right along.

But when you inject the church in here as the King James translators did, the Lord added to the church daily such as for 9 out of 10 Christians.

That's it. That's the end of the argument right there. That's the church. C-H-U-R-C-H. That's it. Case closed. They look no further. Ask no further questions.

It is as obvious as it can be. Open and shut. And it is a great, great mistake. Isn't God finished with Israel? Of course not.

They are now set aside in unbelief, but there is more to come. Look, if you will, at chapter 3. Peter is going to deliver a second sermon. And to whom is he going to deliver it?

[44 : 22] You got it. The nation of Israel. Jews and Jews alone. Verse 12, chapter 3.

Peter saw this. He replied to the people. And here is what he called them. Men of Israel! Why do you marvel at this?

Or why do you gaze at us as if by our own power or piety we had made him walk? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The God of our fathers.

Jewish, Jewish, Jewish, Jewish. There is not a Gentile involved. There will not be a Gentile involved until Acts chapter 10 when Peter is forced by the Holy Spirit to include a Gentile on the scene.

And he didn't want to do it then. Didn't even want to go to the man's house and have a meal with him because he wasn't a Jew. This whole thing is all Jewish. And notice, if you will, Peter makes an incredible offer to the nation of Israel which one would think if Israel had been set aside in unbelief and rejected by God because they'd rejected the Messiah, where does Peter get off making an offer like this?

[45 : 38] The point is, dear friends, Israel is still within the limits of God's blessing and God's promise. He has not yet set them aside.

He didn't set them aside at the end of the Acts. Or at the end of the Acts he sets them aside, but he didn't set them aside at the end of the Gospels and they're certainly not set aside here. The conclusion in chapter 3 beginning with verse 17 is just absolutely staggering.

And now, brethren, says Peter, I know that you acted in ignorance just as your rulers did also. But the things which God announced beforehand by the mouth of all the prophets that his Messiah should suffer he has thus fulfilled.

Now, look at this. What God announced that the Messiah should suffer he has fulfilled.

There is a two-pronged approach to the kingdom. If you forget what else I've said, remember this.

[46 : 54] There are two things that must occur before the kingdom can be established. One is God's part and one is Israel's part. God's part is to provide the Messiah to suffer and die for the sins of the world to provide a legal basis for God lifting the curse and bringing in the kingdom.

That's God's part. Peter says God has done his part that the Messiah should suffer he has thus fulfilled.

God has done his part. What's Israel's part? Israel's part is as a nation to embrace that suffering Messiah as theirs.

And when they do as a nation as a nation when they do God will establish that kingdom. That's what Peter says. Look at the next verse.

Verse 19 Repent therefore and return that your sins may be wiped away in order that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord.

[48 : 06] Oh, what will he do? And that he may send Jesus the Messiah appointed for you. Listen, he just left a little bit earlier than that in the ascension.

Now Peter makes this tremendously significant statement and Peter is either on target or he's out of line. I think he's on target. Peter says, listen, if you as a nation that formerly rejected Jesus as your Messiah, if you as a nation will now engage in national repentance like Nineveh did when Jonah went to them, if you as a nation will repent, God will send him back.

Right now. God will send him back. the persecution of Peter and John begins in the next chapter and they have their answer.

It will culminate in the stoning of Stephen in Acts chapter 7 and Israel as a nation continues to come out with a negative response, a negative response, a negative response and finally at the end of the Acts.

Israel is set aside in 70 A.D. the temple is destroyed, the very nerve center of Judaism goes right down the tubes at the hands of the Roman soldiers and Paul the apostle is established to be the apostle to the Gentiles and he writes in Romans 9, 10, and 11 how that Israel has been set aside in their unbelief and that Gentiles represent the wild olive branch grafted in.

[49 : 54] And it is all a progressive unfolding, developing of a story. We know the answer that Peter and John gave when they preached this message.

It was a negative answer like John the Baptist got, a negative answer like Jesus got. They got a negative answer and when Paul addressed the Jews in the very last chapter of the book of Acts from morning until evening the Jewish constituency came to him and he received them and he expounded to them things from the scriptures concerning Jesus the Messiah.

Some believed and some believed not and Paul said Isaiah the prophet has you guys pegged. Do you know what he said about you? Having eyes you see not having ears you hear not lest the truth come to you and you become converted.

Stubbornness of the rebellious human heart and it isn't just for Jews it is for all of us for all of us. May I say by way of application God has done his part God has provided Jesus as the sin bearer for the world.

God has provided Jesus as a sacrifice for your sin. Do you know what your part is? Your part is the same as the nation Israel's. Repent of sin and embrace Jesus as your Lord and as your Savior.

[51 : 23] God has done all that he can do. Think of it friends. God has done all that he is capable of doing. That's really saying something.

God has done all that he is capable of doing in providing a sacrifice for your sin. Now what are you going to do? Are you going to reject God's provision like Israel did?

Are you going to repent and receive Jesus as your personal Savior? May we pray. Father, this portion of Scripture has so clearly set forth your marvelous provision for all of humanity, Israel included and us included.

And we pray that the Spirit of God will take these truths and these passages and apply them to human hearts. Lord, you know if we could, we would impress the truth upon everyone so that they would find it irresistible.

Despite that being our desire, we are not capable of doing it. Only the Holy Spirit can take these truths and enable people to see them. It was true for Israel.

[52 : 50] It is true for us. For whatever part each of us is able to play, may we realize our responsibility and may we even right now individually say, Lord Jesus, I simply want to open my heart and my life to you.

If God has done his part by providing you as my Savior, I want to do my part. I want to embrace you and receive you and take you as my very own.

Lord Jesus, I give myself to you because you've given yourself for me. thank you for dying on my behalf. I trust you as my Lord and my Redeemer.

We pray, our Father, that there are those here this morning who may never have made that decision. They would come to grips with the need and the reality for it even right now.

Seal to their hearts the truth that you will never leave them nor forsake them. All they need do has opened themselves to you.

[53 : 57] In Christ's name we pray. Amen. If you've made such a decision this morning, I would encourage you to tell someone about it. Perhaps a friend or relative with whom you came or let me know about it.

I'd be glad to talk with you in private and give you some literature and some tapes that will be of help to you. If you have questions, feel free to bring them to me. If you'd like to ask questions about this session this morning, write them out and leave them in the box.

It is my intention when we conclude this series that we will have however many open forums we need to entertain however many questions there are. I think that would probably be better than trying to tack it on with five or six minutes at the end of each session.

So feel free to bring any questions you may have and we will have in an effort to answer your questions a time of just open discussion for the congregation.

If one Sunday morning won't do it, we'll use two or however many it takes and that will be in a couple of weeks. You are dismissed. next week.